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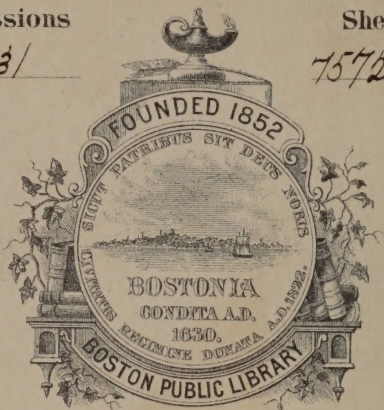


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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE HINGHAM PEACE SOCIETY,

DECEMBER 6, 1821.

BY CHARLES BROOKS,
MINISTER OF THE THIRD CHURCH IN HINGHAM.

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ADDRESS.

MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

THE first question, that presents itself to the christian philanthropist, is this—how can the peace now enjoyed be made perpetual? Our country is happy, peaceful, and prosperous. We are occupying that middle station, between a dangerous excitement and disgraceful apathy, so favourable to sure progress. We should consider ourselves the property of that country, whose honour and interests God has entrusted to our care. Our populous cities and richly cultivated towns; our churches, colleges, and schools; our equal rights; our uncorrupted tribunals of justice; our spirit of enterprise; our habits of order and peace; all combine to render us a commonwealth as highly blest as the world has witnessed. We should lament to see these cities besieged and our fields laid waste, and our dwellings destroyed. How, then, the question returns, are we to perpetuate the blessings of peace? An end sought implies a regard to all the proper means.

The grand object of peace societies is, to turn public opinion against war.—Render war unpopular, and you put a stop to it. Can men be made to abstain from war from two motives—self-interest and christian principle? Cannot the standard of morals, by common consent, be raised so high, and fit objects of enterprise

be so presented to the public, that christian principle and self-interest will be enlisted in favour of peace? To say they cannot be, because they have not been, is denying our ability to improve. Our age is one of increasing light. We are peculiar in having a press send forth knowledge into every corner of our land; in having the pure principles of christianity generally understood; in having the commercial system in that full operation which makes every man's property moveable and transferable, and in having more extended views of the law of nations. These are the great engines that now effect public opinion. To these, then, peace societies should direct their attention.

We shall not discuss the question concerning artificial society; although men have not been wanting who in their single zeal to pull down established institutions, have ransacked history to cull out enormities which have deformed society; and when, by rapid statements, they have presented us with a cluster of miseries, have boldly asked, whether artificial society is not the greatest curse that has befallen man? Now, we all know, that history while it says little concerning the days of quiet and prosperous advancement, records with care, each particular concerning war and tyranny. The reason is obvious. We remember war as we remember when we were sick. We date from these interruptions of our usual ease. It would not be difficult to collect all the instances of our pain, and so arrange them, as to give an impression that much of life had been suffering, when the truth is far otherwise.—Nevertheless from the many wars which history tells of, this conclusion certainly may be drawn; that more have been witnessed than were needful.

We are to look for the causes of peace to the world in future, in the peculiar circumstances of our situation and in an enlightened anticipation of the future. Taking note, then, of what is past, viewing soberly the present, and judging what the future may be, the conclusion is, that in our day, particularly in our country, war

will not be needful. Whatever may have been its necessity in former times, the political and moral reasons against it now, should render its future existence inexpedient.

I. Among the means for securing our favorite object to which our attention should be directed is, *the purity of the press*. Knowledge is power. A general diffusion of knowledge is as necessary to permanent peace, as it is to preserve a republic from the arts of a demagogue. We see in the invention of printing, the dawning of an intellectual day. It renders our age different from those preceeding. We have preserved to us the treasured wisdom of all former days ; and the press, while it has been the store-house of knowledge, has emancipated human reason from the tyranny of ancient prejudice, and has roused a spirit, which will last till truth is esteemed worthless. Its power is resistless. We look to it for our intellectual food ; for there is not an important idea even whispered, before it takes it, as upon the wings of the four winds, to every family in a land. It makes its voice heard daily and hourly by all who think and feel ; and it can call upon the world to join with us in our work of mercy. Its rightful province is, to widen the circle of knowledge and civilization ; to make common the advantages of political union ; to strengthen the foundation of equitable government ; to multiply the number of those who understand and value their civil rights ; to secure society against a spirit of revolution ; to make the science of legislation the science of human happiness, and to establish in a community, order and good fellowship. How are these effects to be secured ? is an interesting question.—The answer is, by an enlightened public presiding over its purity. The press is the mighty engine that designing men will always use. Be it, then, the wisdom of society to compel it “ to borrow its tone from the spirit of the times ;” and therefore to lend its aid to the cause of prevailing truth and virtue. It has often instead of light and intelligence, sent blindness

upon the people, and held up a veil before the vices of the great. Let the lovers of peace see that this is done no longer. We should purify these fountains and cleanse their waters. While pacific principles should be industriously, disseminated, publications of an opposite character should be carefully suppressed. Let not the public mind be kept in perpetual alarm by that insinuating demagogue who would hope to rise eminently by the tumult and ruin he might cause; but, as gradual improvement and a right apprehension of things depend on the advance of reason and the diffusion of knowledge, let the press be the vehicle only of useful information and pacific principle. The human faculties are, or will be, capable of establishing solid and simple systems of moral and political philosophy; and as these are hastened, war and disunion will be found less common. This duty belongs to us, by scattering the light of learning, and recommending by example the precepts of religion. His guilt is scarcely to be measured who directs a poisonous book to the unguarded minds, the ardent tempers and the yielding passions of the young. Equally abandoned is he, who, whether through eagerness for office or money, shall use the press to awaken the worst appetites of the human heart, and to publish principles which tend to spread violence and slaughter and woe through the family of God. I tremble for the account that man must render before the judgment seat of the Prince of peace. We see what the press can do, by what it has done. What has given a new direction to the current of human affairs? What has made so many of our population adequate judges in most political proceedings? What notifies us of any irregular beatings in the public pulse. What teaches us how to think and feel upon subjects of common interest and great weight? What dissipates twilight views and gives us the full light of day? What diffuses these great principles of action, which rescue a community from a blind obedience to the passions of

a Ruler ?—It is the press.—Let an intelligent christian public, then, guard it with untired vigilance. Let them compel it to advocate and enforce principles, which tame the ferocity, elevate the sentiments and refine the manners of all classes ; compel it to frown upon boisterous reformers, with their misapplied smatterings of science and politicks ; compel its inquiries to favour pacific sentiments and pure religion, and to promote moral order by an elucidation of the nature and relations of man ; let them compel it to pour light upon the pages of our pacific constitution.—In short, let them compel it to act on public opinion as the sun acts upon the world, enlightening at once a collected whole, with a direct influence on each separate part. How else can the all-important civil duties, the equally important social ties, which regulate our mutual intercourse, be fully known ? While the highest stations of a land are open to the ambition of each one, and while it is of unspeakable importance for rulers to be guided by principle, and not swayed by passion ; and while the stability of existing institutions depends on a general diffusion of knowledge, what can be more needful than the purity of that power which has a ceaseless action upon the public mind ? What should demand higher solicitation than that, which helps each day to model the thoughts of the rising generation ; to develope their powers, mature their virtues, and give direction to their future character ? Let it go abroad, then, as a principle, that with all accounts of war and slaughter, such woe should be deprecated with the most awakened christian feelings. Let every press become an enemy of tumult and violence, by becoming a friend of peace and justice ; and the salutary effects, shall be experienced in every fibre, vessel and pore of the body politick.

II. Connected with our duty of giving a pacific direction to the press, is our duty of extending the *religion of peace*.—God, in times past, had spoken to the fathers by the Prophets ; but now, the fullness of the

time was come for him to address the best affections of the human heart. The great system of preparation had accomplished its purposes; a religion of the affections, a religion of peace, was now to be given to man; and behold! already God is bowing his holy heavens; and lo! that harbinger of good tidings, the star of Bethlehem appears! Amidst the stillness of the night the faithful shepherds are watching their flocks. The heavens are looking mildly down upon them, when suddenly from the skies breaks upon them the sweet song of the angels.—“Glory be to God in the highest; on earth peace, good will to men.”—And now shall men subscribe to this sentiment uttered by the Most High in the messengers from his presence; or will they reverse it?—They have reversed it; and daring to say, “Glory to God in the highest”; have dared also to add to it, *on earth war, enmity to man*.

Christianity, in stating that wars and violence come of lusts and passions, has unequivocally forbidden them. Men are still tormented with the ebullition of human passion, the insolence of pride, the rapacity of avarice, the lust of power, the struggles of ambition, and the thirst of revenge. Christianity, therefore has put the check where it was most needed, on thoughts and motives. Its spirit is the best spirit of peace. Study to be quiet. Lead quiet and peaceable lives. Put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Live in peace and the God of peace shall be with you. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace. Peacemakers are the sons of God. The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace and joy in a holy mind. The blessed Saviour was the Prince of peace. His doctrine and life were those of love and mercy. His character, more than any other being, resembled the character of God. He lived, blessing—he died, blessing—he ascended, blessing, and left behind him his blessing as his choicest legacy:—“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you.” Religion is every thing or it is nothing. My friends, it is not a vain thing for man,

because it is his life, Christianity is the blessing of blessings; the charter of our hopes; the law by which we are to live; the rule by which we must be judged. The question is, how can we enforce its precepts, how can we display its spirit? Its precepts are summed up in love to God and man; and it requires the display of purity of heart and life. Be it our solicitude, then, to disseminate this mild religion among all classes, by the contagious example of upright characters. All things else are but relatively valuable. "We rely in vain on peace and freedom, riches and territory, letters and arts, without virtuous principles and habits to direct their use, and secure their continuance." Vice must make a nation unhappy, and bring on the disordered state of passion. Would you make a nation secure and happy, make it intelligent and virtuous. Virtue, peace, prudence and happiness, these are wisdom.

The fountains of legislation should be kept pure; and the direct way to effect this, is to keep public opinion so. It is christian principle that we want disseminated. Let those virtues on which our national security most permanently rests, be imbedded in the hearts of our countrymen, and our object is secured. Then legislators will legislate for the common good; the judiciary, unawed by power, will decide equitably for all, and the executive will have but the single aim of promoting peace at home and honour abroad. Be it our happiness, then, to declare in favour of religion and peace. Virtue is man's highest good. Conscience is God within us; let us endeavour that rulers and ruled, the few and the many alike obey its dictates; let books be multiplied on books recommending the practice of virtue and strengthening the social law of love. Let reason set a disciple at the feet of Jesus, and let the intelligent of our land be ever telling us what they learn. Let there be one general combination of religion and peace against vice and violence. With the general diffusion of knowledge by means of the press, let there be as wide a diffusion of correct

moral principle ; for, virtue is the life-blood of the state ; the treasured safe-guard of justice and order. Let us do, then, what we can to enlighten the ignorant, to reform the wicked, correct the erroneous, to recall the wandering, to strengthen the weak, to encourage the backward, and to make christianity the guide and comfort of every soul. Christianity in its power, is powerful indeed. It will allay the angry passions of men ; it is as the oil poured upon the boisterous waves.—Christians, the object of your society, is the moral elevation of the human race. Banish ignorance, then, from your families, your neighbourhood, your state ; destroy the strong holds of vice and build upon their ruins the temple of virtue. Be it your glory as individuals, as it should be the glory of legislatures, “to aid in establishing morals and religion, both as means of safety to the government, and happiness to the people. The first step in accomplishing this purpose is, to fix the principles of virtue, and impress the importance of religious practice, by enlarging the sphere of mental light ; touching the springs of curiosity, opening the channels of inquiry, and pouring into the mind new materials of thought and reflection. All branches of intellectual improvement will lead to moral goodness. The mind, which is taught to expatiate throughout the works of God ; to ascend to the heavenly worlds and find him there, to go into the deep secrets of nature and find him there, to examine the wonders of its own structure, and look abroad into the moral constitution of things, and perceive the hand of the Invisible, giving laws to the Universe, will be impressed with a sense of its own dependence, and feel something of the kindling flame of devotion. It is not in human nature to resist it. And so the man, who begins to study the organization of society, the mutual relation and dependences of its parts, its objects, and the duties it imposes on those who would enjoy its benefits, will soon be made to respect its institutions, value its privileges, and practice the moral virtues in which its very exist-

ence consists. The more extensively these inquiries are encouraged, and these principles inculcated, in the elements of education, the greater will be the certainty of moral elevation of character, and the brighter the prospects of a virtuous and peaceful community. In regard to religion, ignorance is its deadliest bane. It gathers the clouds of prejudice from all the dark corners of the mind, and causes them to brood over the understanding and too often the heart, with a dismal chilling influence. It gives perpetuity to error, defies the weapons of argument and reason and is impassive even to the keen sword of eternal truth. Religion requires the aid of knowledge to be received in its purity and felt in its power. To bring into salutary action, these two great instruments of human happiness, religion and morals, nothing is of so much importance, as to multiply the facilities of education and quicken the spirit of enlightened inquiry." The situation and character of our country are peculiarly favourable for bringing about these desirable results. The specific form of government is generally determined by permanent causes in the hand of Providence. The die for this American Union is cast, and we must stand the issue of that great experiment, a popular government. God grant, that knowledge and moral rectitude may have that wide diffusion which shall forever prevent any one man, or any favoured few, from swaying, at will, the fortunes of our country. Be it our happiness, be it among our daily efforts, to extend learning and purity, so that our pacific constitution framed in the patient councils of the wise, and maintained by the strenuous efforts of all, may go down to future generations with all the honours of age, with all the strength of wisdom.

III. We find an argument and reason for peace in the *commercial system*. During the times of feudal lords and feudal vassals, when the many were dependent on the few, men were born on a spot that they seldom left except for battle, and being born poor

with the smallest power to remedy their condition, they became the instruments of the rich, and the soldiers of their armies. In these times rancorous jealousies between neighbouring barons were commonly alive. Plunder became trade, and what one gained, was at the expence of another. Commerce has changed this whole face of things. Men and property have become moveable and transferable. There is a new direction of men's labours, new objects of enterprise, and different incentives to action. The energy, then wasted in war, may now find employment in trade. Wealth is acquired without robbery, and fame without murder. Commerce has placed men more on an equality with each other. It is of less consequence than formerly to be well born. The sources of wealth and distinction are open to all. Thus the raw materials are furnished on which the mind may work. There seems in man more native activity than is required for supplying his necessities. If he is confined to a single spot or territory, this surplus energy (if so it may be called,) must find objects on which to exert itself; if they are not objects of peace, they will be those of war. Now those governments are most perfect which afford to the greatest number of individuals, the means of cultivating undisturbed their intellectual and moral powers; of living peaceably together on the liberal footing of equality, and of using all their energies in virtuous enterprize. It is that chastened love of gain, which makes men most happy in their labours, which should be encouraged. We would not eradicate any one of the principles of human nature, but control them; and turn each into its proper channel. Commerce opens opportunities for using all the latent powers of a nation. It makes men peaceful traders, instead of plundering warriors. By giving them employment, they are no longer compelled to become soldiers. That government therefore is truly paternal, which opens every possible avenue of wealth and advantage to all; which presents to all, objects of interest, skill

and happiness. We need not the fruit of rapine and injustice; and government should strive unweariedly to stop these sources of infamous licentiousness. The influence of constant, extended commercial intercourse, is great, almost beyond computation. Close the avenues of commerce, and let vast accumulations of wealth be continued in single families, and we should soon have wars between petty lords and barons. By a well regulated intercourse with other nations, we can bring to our aid their experience and acquisitions; and produce very powerful effects upon the public mind. How can this influence and these effects be made pacific? is an interesting question to the lover of peace. Be it, then, the duty of each community, as it should be the pride of each government, to render commerce the mutual interchange of good fellowship; let its use be, to bring the precious seeds of other climes to plant in our own soil; to bind nation and nation in one bond of amity; to make man the friend of his distant brother; to multiply the comforts of peaceful life; to widen the borders of science; to extend the variety of arts; to strengthen the commonwealth of mind; and to open adequate sources of honourable enterprize. Let it do these things only in part, and we shall hear less of war.

IV. In order that commerce be duly subservient to the objects of peace, the *law of nations* should be fully understood and religiously obeyed. We shall make a few remarks on this law.—A short definition of it is, that it is “none other than the law of nature applied to nations.” Now, this law will have more or less effectual utility, according to the accuracy of men’s observation, and the extent of their experience. Our age is blame-worthy, if it is not more enlightened than any anterior. The invention of printing, which was a natural result of an advanced state of society; the extensive spread of knowledge which followed this invention; the present wide diffusion of more correct views of christianity, and the late improvements arising from a more extended and liberal commerce,—all these rich

blessings which signalize our age, are proofs of the sure advance of the intellectual and moral world. With this common advance of society, what becomes the duty of nations in their relative capacity? Is it not to keep pace with the march of improvement? Look at the civilized world! Nations are rapidly tending towards that state of nature, which properly speaking, is the state of the highest cultivation. They are in a very successful progress toward that utmost limit, which nature has determined they may reach. The press, by giving currency to knowledge, is daily addressing itself to all who can read; and commerce is daily opening objects of worthy enterprize to every active citizen. In this state of improvement, then, ought not external relations, which refer to friendship or war with other states, be subject to the enlightened natural principles that regulate those internal relations, which regard the component parts of a single community? Our social relations are governed by more enlightened moral rules; and the political aspect of the times, warrant our considering the law of nations as proportionably advanced. The law that binds nations, should be adequate to its purpose; which it can be only by progressing as society progresses. He, therefore, will be the wisest legislator, who, while he makes due use of past experience, and soberly views existing circumstances; looks for rules in the enlightened anticipation of the future history of society. If every age, then, should engraft something upon former institutions, what should *we* try to effect? We grant there may be peculiar difficulty in forming general principles of politics, owing to the ceaseless change of men's passions and opinions; and it may be far more difficult to call out the experimental skill, requisite to enforce them in required particular instances; yet, believing in the continual advance of our race, and that prejudice, slavery, corruption and war, will gradually give way to truth, liberty, virtue and peace; and that nations will hereafter move on in the steady march of

growing wisdom; and not with the headlong speed of passion: we ought to strengthen that law which is adequate to the purposes of peace and virtue. Why not aim, then, to make the law of nature, unfolded to the utmost as it may be by christianity, become the law of nations? granting to every christian nation, a right of enforcing it, by punishing violations of it? Let this high object be achieved by the learned politicians of our day. Let the construction of all mutual compacts, leagues, and treaties between nations, depend on the rules and spirit of this law. To this, all christian communities are equally subject. Let the principles of natural reason, helped as it is by increasing christian light, be considered the text book of nations. Thus, nations hereafter, will provoke each other not to war, but to improvement. Is it not time that the great practical principles which bind neighbour and neighbour, should bind state and state? Is not enlightened religion, good politics? Does not God's law regard communities as well as individuals? Can man surround himself with any relations, that shall free him from its requirements? Is it not time that nations felt bound to enforce the appropriate practical requirements of christianity to the utmost? The progressive improvement of political order, is the progressive improvement of mind and religion. Why may it not be received, then, as a fixed doctrine,—‘that the commission of every crime, acknowledged as such, be considered as a violation of the law of nations; and therefore liable to punishment by any of the governments of christendom, who have a code of their own?’ This, I know, considers nations further advanced in civilization and virtue than they have been supposed. But, they are thus advanced; and it is time they should agree on laws adequate to their situation: and those are the laws which are adequate to peace. Thus I have spoken of the means of peace. My friends, I have not spoken of defensive war; or shown how fit preparations for war, help maintain peace, by intimidating lawless plun-

derers, and discouraging systematic encroachment. We have not spoken of that effectual way of accomplishing our purpose, viz: by being at peace among ourselves. You all know, that should every man be a peacemaker in his own family, and in his own neighbourhood, war would become a stranger on the earth; and there would not be found one who would esteem it a glory to trample down the olive branch.

Let us conclude, then, that the causes of peace are "known and determinate"—that whatever will preserve the political purity of the press; whatever will help enforce the social morality of the Gospel; whatever will multiply the proper objects of ambition and enterprize, and strengthen the enlightened law of nations, tends to the establishment of peace. These causes producing their effects, war cannot be commenced or protracted to gratify the ambition, or from the "whim and folly" of any one man.

Some have doubted the expediency of peace societies. Their aim is certainly benevolent and christian; and if they can help, in any way, to prevent the causes of war, and develope the means of peace; if they can help make neighborhoods more friendly; correct any erroneous views; tame any wild desires; soften any stern resentments; allay any rancorous jealousies; check the destructive sway of ambition; obviate the consequences of rival interests, and lessen the unbecoming eagerness for distinction and power; if peace societies can do any of these things, they ought to be multiplied; for, it never should escape the christian ruler, that whatever will exalt the character; pour light into the mind, or cherish the good affections; whatever will dignify the manners, increase the accommodations; direct the taste, and qualify the desires of the community; in short, whatever will make government safe, obedience cheerful, and bind man closer to his brother, helps to strengthen the foundations of social order.—We want permanent quietness. Our fathers "breasted the hazards of a revolution," for

peace—our religion calls for peace—our prosperity and happiness call for peace—human nature calls for peace.

But suppose all christian endeavours fail, and a government will think to settle a doubtful claim by the chances of battle : or suppose some demagogue must have the highest office, and finds no way to it but over the slaughtered bodies of his fellow-citizens ;—then, the trump of war sends out its awful summons to prepare for slaughter : already the enemy is coming.—You have no son, but your neighbour has two ; and one is called for ; and he must go to be set up as a mark to the sharp shooters of the opposing ranks. You have always known these young men, and they promised to be useful in their day. And now the mingled cry of victory and slaughter comes on the wings of the wind to your ears. The young man is brought home to his parents a bleeding corpse ; and the messenger who brings him, takes his brother to fill his place ! O my friends ! if future generations could speak, what would they say ? They would say to us—Let your legacy to us be such principles as shall keep us from butchering one another.

Heaven grant that time to be for ever distant, when the call of the clarion shall reach our fire-sides ; when our children shall be called to the field of death, and when our shores shall be shaded with the floating messengers of destruction.

What great result the high moral Governor of the world intends shall follow the mighty revolutions which, in our day have shaken kingdoms to their centre, he only knows. While, therefore, we piously trust Him who seeth the end from the beginning, it becomes us to rejoice with those nations of Europe who have rest from that common destroyer, who has moistened almost every land with the blood of its own sons. The survivors of this wide-spread ruin, can be likened to none better than those of the primeval world, when looking forth from the vessel in which they had been

miraculously preserved, they perceived that God had closed, in his mercy, the fountains of the deep he had opened in his wrath; that the wind had passed over the waters and assuaged their force, while the re-appearance of well known mountains and land marks, hidden so long under the billows of the inundation, warranted a just and fair confidence, that the hour of its fury had passed away.

O say not that God has ordained war to rid the earth of a surplus population, and that nations need bleeding as well as individuals. This is saying God created us to violate his command, "do no murder." It is only that diseased state, which due caution might avoid, that calls for such remedies, and it ill becomes man to say that his maker gave so many existence but to be wasted in mortal strife.—Be the necessity for war among other nations what it may; our situation proclaims it not needful for us. Our land is at rest and prosperous. In being placed at a desirable distance from other nations, God seems to intend that we should grow up in quietness; for, the angel of christianity when he stepped upon these our shores, loud and joyfully announced, "Peace on earth, good will to man,"—an attestation from heaven that the solitary place should ere long be made glad, and the desert ere long should blossom; and, thanks be to God, the solitary place has been made glad, and the desert does rejoice and blossom as the rose.

O God! in thy sparing mercy grant unto us, that the time may be far, far distant, when the sound of war shall be heard amidst our peaceful dwellings, and the ravages of violence shall destroy our present comfort. O! be thou unto us a protecting Father—go with us, with thy salvation—let thy cloud of mercy overshadow us by day, and thy pillar of fire guide us by night, till they conduct us safely to our better rest.

